

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-28 (Cancelled).

29. (Currently Amended) A method for manufacturing a vehicle frame assembly that is adapted to be resiliently supported upon a plurality of vehicle wheels by a suspension system and is adapted to serve as a platform upon which a body portion of the vehicle can be mounted comprising the steps of:

(a) providing first and second side rails that each extend the entire length of the vehicle frame assembly to be manufactured;

(b) hydroforming the first and second side rails so as to have respective integrally formed mounting structures;

(c) providing structures on the first and second side rails to facilitate the connection of a front bumper assembly and a rear bumper assembly thereto;

(d) ~~(e)~~ providing a plurality of cross members;

(e) ~~(d)~~ securing the cross members to the first and second side rails to form a vehicle frame assembly that is adapted to be resiliently supported upon a plurality of vehicle wheels by a suspension system and is adapted to serve as a platform upon which a body portion of the vehicle can be mounted; and

(f) ~~(e)~~ connecting a component of the vehicle directly to the integrally formed mounting structures of the first and second side rails without the use of brackets or other mounts.

30. (Previously Presented) The method defined in Claim 29 wherein said step (b) is performed by hydroforming the first and second side rails so as to have respective first and second protrusions.

31. (Previously Presented) The method defined in Claim 30 wherein said step (b) is further performed by orienting the first and second side protrusions to extend respectively from the first and second side rails toward one another.

32. (Previously Presented) The method defined in Claim 29 wherein said step (b) is performed by hydroforming the first and second side rails so as to have respective first and second apertures formed therethrough.

33. (New) The method defined in Claim 29 wherein said step (c) is performed by providing structures on the first and second side rails to facilitate the connection of a front bumper assembly, a rear bumper assembly, and a pair of control arms thereto.

34. (New) The method defined in Claim 29 wherein said step (c) is performed by providing structures on the first and second side rails to facilitate the connection of a front bumper assembly, a rear bumper assembly, and a pair of leaf springs thereto.

35. (New) The method defined in Claim 29 wherein said step (c) is performed by providing structures on the first and second side rails to facilitate the connection of a front bumper assembly, a rear bumper assembly, and a cab thereto.

36. (New) The method defined in Claim 29 wherein said step (c) is performed by providing structures on the first and second side rails to facilitate the connection of a front bumper assembly, a rear bumper assembly, and a box thereto.

37. (New) The method defined in Claim 29 wherein said step (c) is performed by providing structures on the first and second side rails to facilitate the connection of a front bumper assembly, a rear bumper assembly, a pair of control arms, a pair of leaf springs, a cab, and a box thereto.